



**Members:**

Sen. Sandra Dempsey, Chair  
Sen. Sue Landske  
Sen. Joseph Zakas  
Sen. Rose Antich  
Sen. William Alexa  
Sen. Earline Rogers  
Rep. Thomas Alevizos  
Rep. Charlie Brown  
Rep. Robert Kuzman  
Rep. Timothy Fesko  
Rep. Dean Mock  
Rep. Ralph Ayres  
Mayor Duane Dedelow  
Mayor James Perron

## **NORTHWEST INDIANA COMMUTER RAIL AND TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMISSION**

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### **MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date: July 28, 1998  
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.  
Meeting Place: 6100 Southport Road, NIRPC Offices  
Meeting City: Portage, Indiana 46368  
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. Sandra Dempsey, Chair; Sen. Joseph Zakas; Sen. Earline Rogers; Sen. Rose Ann Antich; Rep. Thomas Alevizos; Rep. Timothy Fesko; Rep. Ralph Ayres.

Members Absent: Sen. Sue Landske; Sen. William Alexa; Rep. Charlie Brown; Rep. Robert Kuzman; Rep. Dean Mock; Mayor Duane Dedelow; Mayor James Perron.

The Chair, Sen. Dempsey, called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. and introduced the Commission members. Senator Dempsey announced that because of the lack of a quorum, the Commission could not approve the minutes of the last meeting or make any recommendations. She announced, however, that the Commission would hear the testimony of its scheduled presenters.

#### **Dennis Faulkenberg: Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)**

Mr. Faulkenberg, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer of INDOT, spoke on the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). Mr. Faulkenberg told the Commission that the INDOT has \$1.8 billion in unfunded construction projects. To meet some of these unfunded needs, Mr. Faulkenberg mentioned the Crossroads 2000 program. Mr. Faulkenberg said that the Crossroads 2000 program, which increased various motor vehicle fees and dedicated a portion of the fee increase to highway bonding, will generate about \$560 million over the next four years. He also mentioned the \$70 million appropriated from the State General Fund contained in the 1997-99 Budget. Mr. Faulkenberg commented that TEA 21 will go a long way toward addressing the unfunded needs. He said that the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) expired on September 30, 1997. Last fall Congress approved a six-month extension of the ISTEA law. Mr. Faulkenberg said that the extension expired May 1, 1998. He said that the governors and mayors pressed Congress to approve a multi-year reauthorization bill as soon as possible.

Mr. Faulkenberg said that TEA 21 authorizes about \$219 billion in highway and transit spending over the

next six years. TEA 21 is a large funding and policy bill that reauthorizes the federal highway, transit, safety, research, and motor carrier programs for the six-year period, 1998-2003. Of the \$219 billion, \$175 billion is authorized for highways, \$41 billion for transit, \$2.2 billion for highway safety programs, and \$650 million for motor carrier safety grants.

On an annual basis, TEA 21 authorizes a federal highway program that spends an average of \$26.1 billion from FY 1998-2003. This is compared to about \$20 billion under the 1991 ISTEA.

TEA 21 includes a provision that guarantees spending of gas tax revenues over the life of the bill. Of the total amount authorized in the bill, \$200.5 billion is guaranteed spending for highway, transit, and safety spending (\$165 billion for highways and \$35 billion for transit). This is a compromise. The House wanted to take the Highway Trust Fund "off budget." The Senate did not. This provision ensures that, on an annual basis, tax revenues deposited into the Highway Trust Fund are spent on transportation improvements.

Mr. Faulkenberg said that TEA 21 maintains the basic structure of the 1991 ISTEA. He also said that while additional flexibility and streamlining provisions were included in the bill to help states use their federal highway funds to address local priorities, the Enhancements, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, Interstate Maintenance, and other federal spending categories remain, with the addition of a twelve new categories

Mr. Faulkenberg said that TEA 21 improves and updates the federal formulas that determine how Highway Trust Fund revenues are distributed among states. For donor states like Indiana, TEA 21 provides a guaranteed return of 90.5 cents for every federal gas tax dollar paid by Indiana motorists. He said that this is an increase from the 78 cent average return Indiana received under the 1991 ISTEA bill. This can be seen in the exhibit entitled, "Where Your Highway Taxes Go".<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Faulkenberg said that Indiana will receive about \$617 million per year, up from about \$350-\$400 million per year average in the 1991 ISTEA law, an increase of about \$212 million per year, or a 52.2% increase.

Mr. Faulkenberg provided an exhibit, Federal Highway Funds<sup>2</sup>, which shows the estimated annual increase in federal highway funds for the life of TEA 21, 1998-2003 for the State of Indiana.

Mr. Faulkenberg next talked about capital construction and preservation. The Capital Construction program for the INDOT for the next four years can be seen in the exhibit, INDOT Capital Construction Program.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Faulkenberg told the Commission that the INDOT spends about \$100 million per year on resurfacing of highways, all of which comes from state funds. The resurfacing is part of the INDOT preservation program. This can be seen in the exhibit, INDOT Preservation Program.<sup>4</sup>

In response to a Commission question about federal regulations and whether they are burdensome, Mr. Faulkenberg commented that there is some flexibility. In response to another question for the Commission, Mr. Faulkenberg said that the amount of Surface Transportation Funds went down and not up. He said that more money needs to go to large urban areas. In the division of federal funds to local units, Mr. Faulkenberg said that the INDOT works with the Association of Indiana Counties, the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and the County Commissioners Association.

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<sup>1</sup>This document is on file in the Legislative Information Center, Room 230 of the State House, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46204. The telephone number of the Legislative Information Center is (317)232-9856.

<sup>2</sup>This document is on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

<sup>3</sup>This document is on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

<sup>4</sup>This document is on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).

Mr. Faulkenberg told the Commission that the federal law determines the distributions to local units. Mr. Jim Ranfranz, Director of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), was recognized by the Chair. Mr. Ranfranz said that the U.S Census Bureau determines the lines (boundaries) for TMAs and urbanized areas. TMAs are areas of over 200,000 in population.

### **Burgess & Niple Engineers and Architects: Northwest Indiana Corridor Study**

Mr. Phil Schermerhorn, Deputy Commissioner of INDOT for Public and Legislative Affairs, introduced Mr. D. Bruce Mansfield and Mr. G. Herbert Mack, both of Burgess & Niple. The Burgess & Niple group is conducting the Northwest Indiana Corridor Study. Messrs. Mansfield and Mack made available a handout detailing the planning process for the study.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the study is to identify the major transportation needs for Northwest Indiana. Mr. Mansfield told the Commission that the United States Department of Transportation requires a Major Investment Study (MIS) before any new transportation initiatives are undertaken. The MIS process will involve the extension of the NIRPC System Plan (Vision 2020), along with the involvement of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), the State of Indiana, transit providers, and stakeholders. Stakeholders are identified as public or private groups such as NIRPC, INDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Chambers of Commerce. The process will also have public involvement, develop multimodal alternatives, and provide for the selection of locally preferred alternatives.

As part of the MIS, the consultants will review alternatives for the I-80/94 corridor and the I-65 corridor. Some of the alternatives to be reviewed are: 1) widen the I-80/94 corridor to eight or ten lanes; 2) widen the I-65 corridor to six lanes; 3) possible toll strategies for the I-80/94 corridor; 4) high occupancy vehicle and express lanes for the I-80/94 corridor.

In response to a Commission question about the South Suburban Expressway, Mr. Mansfield said that the work on the Expressway has essentially just begun. The Burgess & Niple group met with the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS) yesterday. They also will be working with the Illinois Department of Transportation. Mr. Mansfield said that the cost for the South Suburban Expressway is estimated at \$3 billion.

In response to a question about the completion date of the study, Mr. Schermerhorn of INDOT said that the study is expected to be completed by the spring of 1999. The Commission then commended Mr. Faulkenberg for his work on TEA 21 on behalf of the State of Indiana.

Mr. Ranfranz of NIRPC was recognized to make some comments. Mr. Ranfranz introduced Mr. Phil Peters of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Mr. Phil Evenson of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and Mr. Art Biciunas, Executive Director of the CATS. Mr. Ranfranz also said that the budget for highways and transportation needs to be much higher. He said that Mr. Curt Wiley, Commissioner of the INDOT, has done a very good job. He also said that process is very slow and it takes a long time to get anything done. Mr. Ranfranz commented further that air quality is still a big problem in the northwest region of Indiana.

In response to a Commission question, Mr. Mansfield said that a study will look at the capacity of the Indiana Toll Road. Mr. Faulkenberg commented that the state spends about \$100 million per year on Toll Road maintenance. Mr. Harold Parmly of the South Shore Freight Railroad was recognized and commented on the need for rail grade crossing safety.

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Commission will be on Wednesday, August 19, at 10:00 a.m. in Hammond, Indiana. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:15.

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<sup>5</sup>This document is on file in the Legislative Information Center (see footnote 1).